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ABSTRACT

As one in a series of reports by 10 task forces that responded to the Oregon Education Act for the 21st Century and explored the restructuring of the Oregon education system, this report presents recommendations of the Non-Graded Primary Task Force. The report describes the feasibility of implementing non-graded primary programs in all school districts. These programs would include strategies for prevention of students' failure and early intervention for students requiring special assistance. The report also recommends a funding formula and an implementation process that recognizes the need for flexible models to meet local needs. Included in the report are: (1) procedures the task force followed to prepare its recommendations; (2) a foundation for using the best educational practices, based on current research, for child development and learning in children in kindergarten through third grade; and (3) recommendations to the Oregon State Board of Education based on this foundation. Appendices include a bibliography of 14 references; definitions of terms; explanations of guiding principles of, and recommended best practices to foster, child development; and materials that concern assessment practices. (MM)

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Non-Graded Primary

Task Force Report
January 1993

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS
Oregon

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Foreword

The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, passed by the 1991 Legislative Assembly, calls for a restructured education system to achieve the state's goals of the "best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a work force equal to any in the world by the year 2010." To begin this massive restructuring effort, the following ten task forces were created to explore ways to initiate the reform and provide guidance for implementation: Alternative Learning Environments, Certificate of Advanced Mastery, Certificate of Initial Mastery, Employment of Minors, Extended School Day/Year, Integration of Social Services, Middle Level, Non-Graded Primary, School Choice, and Site Based Decision Making. Representation on each task force included educators, parents, members of business and industry, and others interested in assisting with the initial phase of development. In addition, drafts of each report were sent to reviewers across the state who provided their input. A sincere "thank you" to all who have assisted with this effort.

This task force report, together with comments received via written and oral testimony, will help shape the direction of the State Board of Education and the Oregon Department of Education for the next phase of development. Underlying all our efforts is the commitment to assure that all students will have equal and open access to a quality education.

For additional information, please contact the 21st Century Schools Council at 373-7118.

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HB 3565

SECTION 19f.

(1) By the 1992 school year, the Department of Education shall recommend models for use by school districts for developmentally appropriate nongraded primary programs for children enrolled in prekindergarten through the primary grades. The models shall be done in consultation with:

(a) Teachers, parents, administrators and classified school employees from schools and Oregon prekindergarten programs that currently provide:

(A) Developmentally appropriate nongraded primary programs;

(B) Comprehensive health and social services;

(C) Active parent involvement;

(D) Extended day services; or

(E) Staff development programs in developmentally appropriate practices;

(b) Higher education faculty representatives from the field of early childhood education.

(c) Community college representatives from the field of early childhood education.

(2) The State Board of Education shall report to the 1993 regular session of the Legislative Assembly on the feasibility of all school districts implementing nongraded primary programs, including strategies for prevention of failure and early intervention for students requiring special assistance.

(3) Plans for early childhood education shall include a recommended funding formula and implementation process that recognize the need for flexible models to meet local needs and shall include strategies that:

(a) Reduce the ratio of students to teachers and other trained adults in the classroom;

(b) Utilize trained classified and other support personnel;

(c) Coordinate comprehensive health and social service to parents and families;

(d) Provide preventive and remedial services;

(e) Provide for extended day services to children either through coordination with existing community providers or through school-sponsored programs;

(f) Improve the curriculum and instructional practices consistent with research;

(g) Provide materials, supplies and equipment needed to carry out developmentally appropriate programs;

(h) Provide inservice training in developmentally appropriate practices for staff;

(i) Encourage parent or guardian participation and education regarding developmentally appropriate practices for young children;

(j) Recognize the necessity for appropriate physical facilities to carry out this subsection;

(k) Encourage heterogeneous groupings of students and discourage negative labeling of children's learning levels; and

(l) Develop nongraded primary models that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the cornerstone of school reform. It is the initial building block upon which all the state's other educational programs will rest. The Oregon State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction have recognized the importance of early childhood education, making it a top priority of the Oregon Department of Education. The Oregon Legislature, when it adopted the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, also recognized the importance of early childhood education by calling for full funding of Oregon Prekindergarten by 1998 and by requiring the Department of Education to develop model early childhood programs and to study developmentally appropriate nongraded primary programs.

Recognition of the importance of early childhood education exists across the nation. The first National Education Goal is : *By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.* The Oregon Progress Board has identified a lead benchmark that parallels the first National Education Goal. Oregon has shown leadership in school readiness by basing the Oregon Prekindergarten Program (OPP) on the proven federal Head Start performance standards and by continuing to expand the number of children eligible for Head Start services. Meeting the nation's goal of school readiness for all children and the state's goal of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a work force equal to any in the world by the year 2010 will require comprehensive, early childhood services to young preschool children and their families. Meeting the state's goals will also require early childhood improvement programs to assist public schools "in providing programs designed to improve educational services for children enrolled in grades kindergarten through three." (Section 19a.(1) of HB 3565)

Ensuring continuity of philosophy, pedagogy, and structure will require that public schools establish transition plans to bridge exits from preschool and entrance to public school. "While we get all children ready for school, we must, of course, get schools ready for children—ready to accept with hope and enthusiasm every child who comes to the schoolhouse door." (Boyer)

A major theme for advancing "readiness" should include a vision for schools policy and practice which responds to two imperatives:

- All students must start on the road to active academic learning with high expectations for success, and therefore:

- Schools must respond appropriately to the diverse needs, characteristics, and experiences of young children. ("Right From the Start," National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), 1988)

The purpose of the report of the Non-Graded Primary Task Force is this:

1. To report to the State Board of Education on the feasibility of all school districts implementing non-graded primary programs, including strategies for prevention of failure and early intervention for students requiring special assistance; and

2. To recommend a funding formula and implementation process that recognizes the need for flexible models to meet local needs and shall include strategies that:

   a. Reduce the ratio of students to teachers and other trained adults in the classroom;
   b. Utilize trained classified and other support personnel;
   c. Coordinate comprehensive health and social services to parents and families;
   d. Provide preventive and remedial services;
   e. Provide for extended day services to children either through coordination with existing community providers or through school-sponsored programs;
   f. Improve the curriculum and instructional practices consistent with research;
   g. Provide materials, supplies and equipment needed to carry out developmentally appropriate programs;
   h. Provide inservice training in developmentally appropriate practices for staff;
   i. Encourage parent or guardian participation and education regarding developmentally appropriate practices for young children;
   j. Recognize the necessity for appropriate physical facilities to carry out these suggestions;
   k. Encourage heterogeneous groupings of students and discourage negative labeling of children's learning levels; and
   l. Develop non-graded primary models that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

This report includes: 1) the procedures the task force followed to prepare its recommendations; 2) a foundation for best practices based on current research for child development and learning in primary age children, kindergarten through grade 3; and 3) recommendations to the State Board of Education based on this

foundation. The appendices include a Bibliography, Principles of Child Development and Recommended Best Practices, and other endorsements in support of these recommendations.

FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY AGE CHILDREN, KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3

These goals of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provide the foundation for all primary education programs.

Children will:

- Grow in their self-esteem, cultural identity, curiosity, independence and individual strength;
- Continue to develop a love of learning;
- Gain increasing muscle control;
- Engage in interesting and appropriate experiences that develop them socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically;
- Use written and spoken language in concrete, relevant, and meaningful ways;
- Use mathematical concepts and mathematical symbols in concrete, relevant, and meaningful ways; and
- Continue to develop control of their behavior through positive adult guidance, become increasingly self-motivated, cooperative, and able to resolve problems among themselves with a minimum of adult direction.

To meet these goals we must recognize developmentally appropriate practices—those practices that match what we know about how children grow and develop with what we know about how children learn and are age and individual appropriate. Age appropriate activities are those that follow universal predictable sequences of growth and change that occur during the years of a child's life. These changes occur in all domains of development: physical, cognitive, and social/emotional. Those working with children in this age group must have extensive knowledge of how children grow and develop and how children learn . This knowledge will contribute to quality primary education programs. Use of individually appropriate activities recognizes and acknowledges each child's unique and personal pattern of development. Those working with primary children must be responsive to each

child's needs, family background, experiences, personality, and learning style.

Teachers can use child development research about individual children's growth patterns to design the learning environment that best meets the needs of each student. It is crucial that teachers and other paraprofessionals working with primary students in Oregon be trained in developmentally appropriate practices.

Developmentally appropriate practices demand that we rethink grouping students primarily by age. Recent studies (Goodlad and Anderson, Pratt, NASBE) suggest that mixed-age grouping in the primary schools offer advantages over age-graded grouping in both academic achievement and social development. The Royal Commission on Education in Canada recommended legislation and policy changes in 1987 to enable schools to establish ungraded primary divisions. The State of Kentucky recently mandated non-graded primaries. Montessori classes have traditionally been made up of children of different ages, and mixed-age grouping has been common in small rural schools throughout the United States. British Infant School and schools in Sweden and New Zealand have also used this model.

Mixed-age grouping is dependent upon developmentally appropriate practices and is a logical extension of developmentally appropriate practices. A key distinction exists between the rationale for non-graded schools and for mixed-age grouping:

> The former is primarily intended to homogenize groups for instruction by ability or developmental level rather than by age; the latter is intended to optimize what can be learned when children of different—as well as the same—ages and abilities have opportunities to interact. (Evangelou, Hartman, and Katz in The Case for Mixed Age Grouping in Early Education, 1991.)

Optimizing learning for children must be the focus for improving early childhood education. "Mixed-age groupings" provide a better descriptor than "non-graded primary" for the type of activities suggested in best practice, yet the critical issue in child development and learning in primary programs, kindergarten through grade 3 is developmentally appropriate practices. The learning environment must reflect the individual, cultural and linguistic diversity of each student.

The characteristics of a good primary program are best stated in the NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practices:

- There is an integrated curriculum where learning in all traditional subject areas occurs primarily through projects, learning centers, and play activities;

- Children learn through active involvement with each other, with adults and older children serving as informal tutors;

- Individual children or small groups work and play cooperatively or alone in learning centers on projects that they usually select themselves;

- Learning materials and activities are concrete, real, and relevant to children's lives;

- The goals of the language and literacy program are for children to expand their ability to communicate orally and through reading and writing, and to enjoy these activities;

- The math program enables children to use math through exploration, discovery, and solving relevant problems;

- Social studies themes are identified as the focus of work for extended periods of time and are learned through a variety of projects and playful activities involving independent research through reading, excursions, discussions, relevant use of language, etc.;

- Discovery science is a major part of the curriculum;

- Art, music, movement, and drama are integrated activities in the learning process;

- Teachers promote socialization behavior, perseverance, industry, and independence by providing many stimulating and motivating activities;

- Teachers promote the development of children's conscience and self-control through positive guidance techniques including setting clear limits in a positive manner and involving children in establishing rules for their class and social living;

- Teachers build on the child's internal motivation and interest;

- Teachers view and accept parents as partners;

- Children are not retained without detailed rationale determined by an interdisciplinary team that supports the action; and

- Pullout programs are discouraged and care is taken to integrate special needs children into all classroom activities.

SUMMARY

The Non-Graded Primary Task Force believes in and supports these principles:

- Learning occurs best when there is focus on the **whole child** and individual needs;
- Learning for children and adults is interactive;
- Young children learn from meaningful, relevant, and concrete experiences;
- Play is essential to learning and development;
- Motivation for learning is enhanced when the activities are child-centered and child initiated; and
- Each child is profoundly influenced by family and background experiences.

Oregon's improved primary program must include these principles.

As our society becomes increasingly complex, the term "at risk" can be applied to most children at one time or another. Childhood poverty increases the likelihood of poor school performance. "In our transitional society with extremely high rates of family dissolution, mental health problems, substance abuse and adolescent pregnancy, few children are risk free" (New York Education Commissioner's Task Force on the Education of Children and Youth At Risk, 1988). Recognition of the whole child means that individual needs of students and families must be met. Forming collaborative agreements with other social service agencies to increase parents' knowledge and access to appropriate services, whether they are social, physical, emotional, cultural, or economic, must occur.

High quality early childhood education is first and foremost a humanitarian investment, but it is also a profitable investment for the future. Children and families who receive support are less likely to fail. We thus reduce the future costs for special education, grade retention, school dropouts, delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and low academic achievement. Earnings and productivity of parents increase when they are supported in

their need for child care and other services. Quality early childhood programs demonstrate a difference between investment now and spending at a later date.

After reviewing the research and literature relating to the education of young children, the task force has concluded that the issue in early childhood education is *developmentally appropriate practices* and support services that will meet the needs of all children and families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force makes the following recommendations regarding HB 3565:

Section 19f(2)

- That it is feasible for all school districts in Oregon to implement developmentally appropriate practices in the primary program, kindergarten through grade 3.

- That the State Board of Education require all school districts in Oregon to implement developmentally appropriate practices, which may include mixed-age grouping, in the primary program, kindergarten through grade 3, by the year 2000.

- That the term non-graded be changed to mixed-age.

  - Mixed-age groups in the primary programs may be implemented at the discretion of local school sites.

  - The decision to implement mixed-age groups shall be based upon staff preparation and understanding of developmentally appropriate practices.

Section 19f(3)

- That funding for the primary program, kindergarten through grade 3, be at the 1.5 level of basic school support.

  - Funding for the primary program, kindergarten through grade 3, be promoted as an investment opportunity.

  - A blend of state, federal and local resources be identified and utilized to support increased funding for the primary program, kindergarten through grade 3.

  - Consideration be given to additional resources in the form of facilities, personnel, volunteer time, or cash.

- That the implementation of this section of the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century be the responsibility of each local 21st Century Schools Council.

- Each local Council will develop models to meet local needs inclusive of the following strategies:

  - The Oregon Department of Education will provide ongoing technical assistance in implementation of improved primary programs, kindergarten through grade 3, inclusive of the strategies identified in all the recommendations to follow (pages 8-13).

  - The State Board of Education, through the Department of Education, will provide resources for model programs to be further developed and established for educators to visit.

Section 19f(3)(a)

- That there be 1 teacher to 15-18 students or no more than 25 with 2 adults, 1 of whom may be a full time educational assistant trained in developmentally appropriate practices. (Adopted from NAEYC's recommendation for class size.)

  - School districts will reduce the number of students in each primary program, kindergarten through grade 3, by a minimum of two students each year.

  - By the year 1998, all primary programs, kindergarten through grade 3, will reflect the recommended adult/student ratio.

Section 19f(3)(b)

- That trained classified staff, other support personnel, and all special services staff be involved in the child's primary classroom setting, where appropriate, to support the instructional programs.

  - There will be opportunities for parents, guardians, and community members to become involved in the classroom on a regular basis.

  - There will be ongoing training for volunteers and parents.

Section 19f(3)(c)

- That school districts form collaborative agreements with other social service agencies:

- To increase parents' knowledge and access to appropriate services for children and families;

- To provide space for social service agencies that will be centrally located for easy access to the school community, within, or as close to the school site as possible; and

- To provide community education programs, which include parent resource libraries, parenting classes, parent support groups, and workshops. These programs will be open to all parents and community members.

• That community based routine health services be available to children and their families at the school identified, centrally located, community site:

- To provide in-service training to early childhood teachers, administrators, and parents to assist in planning for children with special emotional needs and /or families in stress.

Section 19f(3)(d)

• That school districts identify preventive services for all children as a priority and resources for these services be focused at the earliest possible level.

- Preventive services will be assessed on an individual basis by a multidisciplinary team and be provided in the most appropriate setting.

Section 19f(3)(e)

• That school districts collaborate with other agencies and child care providers to ensure that after school child care is available to all who need it.

- School districts will consider a sliding fee scale basis to provide services to all families and encourage a more diverse mix of program participants.

- School districts and other agencies will ensure that the services are available throughout the year.

- School districts will examine district transportation policies to ensure that children can be transported to before and after school child-care programs. School districts will exhibit leadership in collaboration with all

resource and referral and social service agencies, to ensure a seamless service program to young children and their families.

- School districts will collaborate to provide joint staff development opportunities for teachers and other staff serving young children and their families.

Section 19f(3)(f)

- That the NAEYC curriculum and assessment guidelines be used as the guidelines for the Oregon Primary Program, kindergarten through grade 3.

  - Assessment will be reflective of the developmental principles of the curriculum, integrated throughout the primary program and utilized to benefit each individual child.

  - Assessment will be continuous and ongoing and may include:
    - Recorded teacher observation;
    - Recorded anecdotal notes;
    - Recorded student evaluation/reflection;
    - Recorded parent evaluation/reflection.

  - Portfolio collections that include:
    - Samples of student work: writing, drawings, oral tapes, videotapes; and
    - Any other information needed to aid planning for each child and provide feedback to the child and parents.

  - There will be no group administered standardized tests before 4th grade.

  - Statewide standardized assessment will begin at 4th grade.

  - The State Board of Education should request adequate funding for the Oregon Department of Education to fund proposals to develop developmentally appropriate primary program curriculum and assessment models to be used for replication.

Section 19f(3)(g)

- That developmentally appropriate programs will provide a variety of activities, manipulative materials, and equipment as well as time to explore through active involvement.

  - Materials will be concrete, real, relevant, and available to all students.

  - Textbooks will be a resource rather than primary instructional support.

Section 19f(3)(h)

- That districts require and provide inservice training in developmentally appropriate practices for administrative and teaching staff.

  - Districts will allocate funds annually to school sites for staff development in the amount of $500 per licensed staff member with a minimum of $2,000 per site. Staff development plans will be locally designed to meet specific needs which include:
    - Child development;
    - How children learn;
    - Integrated approaches to instruction;
    - Integrated language arts;
    - Concept/process science;
    - Activity based math;
    - Cooperative learning for primary children;
    - Child-centered curriculum choices;
    - Problem solving/higher level thinking skills;
    - Authentic assessment;
    - Mixed-age groupings;
    - Flexible grouping;
    - Anti-bias and cultural awareness; and
    - Other areas as proposed by the local site-based council.

- That there be specific training for those who are responsible for evaluating developmentally appropriate programs and personnel.

- That appropriate course work and professional development are accessible to all geographic areas within the state and to all teachers and administrators of primary programs.

- The Oregon Department of Education will:

  - Identify and support a cadre of exemplary practitioners who will provide training statewide in developmentally appropriate practices;

  - Provide ongoing technical assistance in the development of Oregon Primary Programs; and

  - Develop a resource list of available consultants.

- That by the year 2000 Oregon will require the early childhood endorsement for all primary program (pre-K through grade 3) teachers.

  - Preparation for this endorsement must be accessible to all geographic areas.

Section 19f(3)(i)

- That the following strategies be considered in the development of parent or guardian participation and education regarding developmentally appropriate practices for young children:

  - Staff development in how to involve families;
  - School, social service agencies, and community collaboration to design outreach plans for families/children, beginning at birth;
  - Parent training in child development and how children learn;
  - Establishment of ongoing partnerships with parents to involve them in the education of their children;
  - Planned transition for pre-school children and their families into public school; and
  - Staff development opportunities that are open to parents and other members of the community.

Section 19f(3)(j)

- That appropriate physical facilities are needed to support developmentally appropriate practices in the primary program.

  - Facilities and furnishings must accommodate flexible arrangements based on child-centered activities.

  - The Oregon Department of Education must provide technical assistance and regulatory relief in the process of securing alternative classroom spaces.

Section 19f(3)(k)

- That all school districts be required to implement developmentally appropriate practices by the year 2000.

  - Heterogeneous mixed-age groups should be encouraged as an outcome of in-depth understanding and training in developmentally appropriate practices.

  - Mixed-age groups should be implemented at the discretion of local school sites.

Section 19f(3)(l)

- That primary programs be developed that are culturally and linguistically relevant and inclusive for all children.

  - Children's awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diversity should be expanded through multi-cultural and anti-bias curriculum experiences.

  - Provisions should be made for instruction in the child's first language and removal of communication barriers with parents of differing cultures.

  - Parents and community members should be involved in addressing the cultural needs of the local communities.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Definitions of Terms

ability grouping—grouping students who display the same level of ability for instruction.

active learning—learning that involves the whole child and acknowledges the need for hands-on experiences, exploration, and discovery.

age appropriate—experiences and a learning environment that match a predictable stage of growth and development—physical, social/emotional, and cognitive.

anecdotal record—a written record kept of a child's progress based on milestones particular to that child's social/emotional, physical, aesthetic, and cognitive development. Continuous comments are recorded about what a child can do (achievements) as opposed to what he/she cannot do.

authentic assessment—an assessment of what we actually want students to be able to do or understand; it occurs in the context of normal classroom involvement and reflects the actual learning experience (e.g., portfolios, journals, observations, taped readings, video taping, conferencing, etc.). The tasks are frequently open-ended and judgement is required to evaluate the level of performance.

child-centered—practices which consider the development, age, and interests of the child.

class size—the number of students in a class.

class size ratio—the number of students per adult in a classroom.

cognitive development— includes the various dimensions of thinking, such as comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creative and critical thinking.

cross-age tutoring—students working with other students who are of a different age level.

developmentally appropriate practices—those practices which match what we know about how children grow and develop with what we know about how children learn; they are age appropriate and individually appropriate.

diversity—differences.

early intervention/early childhood special education—services provided to children with special needs and their families, to insure the maximum learning opportunity.

educational assistant—see paraprofessional.

emotional/social development—see social/emotional development.

flexible groupings—groups of children brought together for a specific purpose for a short period of time.

heterogenous grouping—grouping of children based on differences (age, sex, race, achievement, etc.).

higher level thinking skills—those skills that require more than recall of information.

home visits—visits made to student's home by the teacher or other school personnel to establish a partnership with the parents and set learning or other relevant goals.

homogeneous grouping—grouping of children based on similarities (age, skill level, interest, etc.).

individual appropriateness—those practices which acknowledge the individual developmental timeline of each student.

inservice—classes, conferences, workshops, or meetings held to assist practicing educators in improving their skills.

integrated curriculum—bringing together content areas to make natural connections among the knowledge and skills being taught in order to create learning activities which are true to life.

mixed-age grouping—heterogeneous groups of children that span a minimum of at least a year's age difference. For example, grades K-1,1-2, 2-3.

multi-age—see mixed-age grouping.

NAEYC—National Association for the Education of Young Children—a membership-supported organization of people committed to fostering the growth and development of children from birth through age eight.

non-graded/mixed-age groupings— a heterogeneous grouping of children, without regard to the number of years that they may have been in school, placed in a classroom setting that provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum and a learning environment based upon each child's individual needs.

open door policy—parents, guardians, and community members are always welcome and encouraged to be involved in the school.

paradigm shift—move from an old view to a new vision.

paraprofessionals—those who work with teachers and who usually are not certificated. Sometimes referred to as teaching assistants or teacher aides.

peer—equal in position or age.

planning time—time set aside during the contract day for the educators to plan and collaborate.

portfolios—a collection of items completed by an individual which can be reviewed to help determine growth.

preservice—classes, workshops, and meetings conducted for individuals who are preparing to enter the teaching profession.

preventive services—programs designed to assist students and families in identified areas of need.

remedial services— programs designed to bring children up to an expected performance level.

self-contained—a class of one grade level with one teacher (traditional classroom model).

self-esteem—how the person values himself/herself.

skill group—grouping of children for a short period of time to work on a specific skill.

social/emotional development— the development of positive, productive working relationships with other children and adults. Developing a sense of competence contributes to the child's sense of success.

social services— health and human services generally provided by other agencies to meet the needs of children and their families.

teacher as facilitator—role of the teacher to organize the environment so students can be actively involved in the learning process versus the teacher as an imparter of knowledge.

textbook driven curriculum—the text becomes the driving force for the instructional program.

ungraded—see non-graded.

whole child—consideration of the physical, social/emotional, and cognitve development of the child in meeting needs.

Appendix C

Guiding Principles and Best Practices in Early Childhood Education

Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson, and others have provided us with principles of child development and learning. The following principles/practices are based on their work and adapted from NAEYC "Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 Through 8" (1990).

PRINCIPLE: Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel safe and secure.

*** PRACTICE: Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) respects biological needs. Example: Children are not made to sit and do paperwork or listen to adult lectures for long periods of time. DAP calls for active involvement in the learning process, periods of play, quiet, rest, and activity. The environment is safe and secure, children are free to question, explore, and risk. Everyone is accepted.

PRINCIPLE: Children construct knowledge.

*** PRACTICE: Meaningful interaction with social and physical environment results in construction of knowledge. The child discovers through active experimentation. "Constructive errors" allow the child opportunity to apply his/her own hypotheses, try them out through mental calculations and physical manipulation, observe what happens, compare findings, ask questions, and discover answers. This makes learning and new information meaningful.

PRINCIPLE: Children learn through social interaction with other adults and other children.

*** PRACTICE: The prime example is the parent-child relationship. The teacher encourages and fosters this relationship as well as those with the child's peer group and other adults. The teacher is the facilitator, one who guides and supports the child to function independently.

PRINCIPLE: Children learn through play.

*** PRACTICE: Play provides endless opportunity for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation—elements essential to the construction of knowledge. Children examine and refine learning during play as a result of feedback and interactions from others and the environment. Children develop imagination and creativity during play. During the primary years play becomes more rule oriented and children learn principles of teamwork

and cooperation. Play is an essential contributor to the child's social, emotional, and intellectual development.

PRINCIPLE: Children's interests and "need to know" motivate learning.

*** PRACTICE: Children want to make sense of their world and experiences. In a DAP environment the teacher finds out what children want to know, what they want to learn about, allows children to question, and then helps them find solutions and solve problems together. DAP classroom activities are child-centered and frequently child-initiated. Children are motivated to learn because they are interested. This develops love of learning, natural curiosity, and independence.

PRINCIPLE: Human development and learning are characterized by individual differences.

*** PRACTICE: A wide range of individual variation is normal in every classroom. Each human being has his or her own pattern, timing of growth, and development as well as individual learning style. What each child brings because of family background and experience influences where that child is on the continuum of development. DAP teachers acknowledge this and plan lessons that maximize upon the diversity.

PRINCIPLE: Size of classroom groups and ratio of adults to children is carefully regulated to allow active involvement of children and time for teachers to plan and prepare group projects that integrate learning and skills in many subject areas.

*** PRACTICE: Groups of 5-6-7- and 8-year olds are no larger than 25 with 2 adults, one of whom may be a paraprofessional, or no larger than 15 to 18 with one teacher. Groups vary in size and composition depending on the children's needs. Children are placed where they will do best, determined by developmental rather than by chronological age. Grouping is flexible and always planned to maximize the opportunity for the students within the group. 5- through 8-year olds are assigned a primary teacher and remain in relatively small groups of 15 to 25 because much of their learning and development is integrated and cannot be divided into specialized subject areas. Specialists assist the primary teacher in planning. Care is taken to mainstream the special needs student socially as well as physically. All children are respected as unique individuals. In MIXED-AGE GROUPS children may remain with the same teacher for more than one year.

PRINCIPLE: Assessment practices for young children reflect the developmental principles of the curriculum, are integrated throughout the program, and are utilized to benefit each individual child.

*** PRACTICE: Children's development and learning in all domains—physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and their dispositions and feelings—are routinely and daily assessed by teachers' observation of children's activities and interactions, listening to them as they talk, and using children's constructive errors to understand their learning. Periodic samples of writing and drawings, oral tapes of reading, and videotapes or observations of social interaction and problem solving become examples in a portfolio for each child.

Assessment is designed to address the individual diversity of the learners and allows for differences in styles and rates of learning. Assessment practices also consider the child's ability in English, stage of language acquisition, and whether the child has been given the time and opportunity to develop proficiency in their native language as well as in English. All assessment information is then used to adapt the curriculum, plan activities to meet the needs of each child, and provide feedback to parents.

PRINCIPLE: The most important consideration in evaluating and using standardized tests is the "utility criterion," that is, the purpose of testing must be to improve services for children and ensure that children benefit from their educational experiences.

*** PRACTICE: Review the use of standardized tests in early childhood programs to ensure that:

- Any standardized test used is reliable and valid according to the technical standards of test development and is *used only for the purpose* for which the test is designed. Ensure that test administration is sensitive to the developmental needs of young children. Group standardized tests are not appropriate.
- Decisions that have a major impact on children are not based on a single test score. Tests are not used for placement of children in homogeneous groups, to retain children in a grade, or to determine eligibility for enrollment.
- Any standardized test selected to assess achievement or evaluate a program be based on how well a given test matches the locally determined philosophy and objectives of the early childhood and primary programs.
- Testing of young children recognizes and is sensitive to individual and cultural diversity.

Appendix D

OESPA Position Statement on Assessment Practice in the Elementary Schools Presented to the Oregon Non-graded Task Force March, 1992

Position Statement

The Oregon Elementary School Principals' Association (OESPA) supports The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in its proposed resolution No. 2, ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS.

1. Educational standards specifying what students should know and be able to do as clearly defined through a broad based consensus process before assessment procedures and exercises are developed.

2. An assessment system based on standards, having as its primary purpose the improvement of instruction and the advancement of student learning. The system will be fair; encourage flexibility and variety in student demonstration of competence; use methods and instruments that are valid and are appropriate representations of the standards students are expected to achieve; and will be reliable.

3. An assessment system requiring that data be reported in the context of other relevant information (community and school contexts, resources, programs and processes, and outcome) involve educators in its design and use; be understandable to those who use it; and include processes that insure continuous review and improvement.

The OESPA supports the State Department of Education in its goal of promoting excellence in education for all the children of this state. The state's implementation of assessment practice demonstrates a desire to design and implement more appropriate ways to assess student outcomes than those typically used by the makers of nationally normed achievement tests. We believe that Oregon's plan is consistent with NAESP's position statement and applaud these initial accomplishments.

OESPA's goal in presenting this position statement to the Non-Graded Primary Task Force is to offer the task force and state another avenue of communication with principals and teachers in Oregon. OESPA joins NAESP in urging members to become involved in state and local activities to improve communications between all levels of the education community. We believe that by working together we can better meet the needs of Oregon children and that together we can restructure our schools in ways that improve student outcomes and meet the needs of a changing society.

Assessment Recommendation

On February 21, 1992, a committee of OESPA Executive Board members appointed by OESPA President Nancy Hays met to share information from other principals and administrators regarding state assessment practices. Issues generated from this meeting were brought to the attention of the Non-Graded Primary Task Force at its meeting on March 13, 1992. Of specific concern to Oregon elementary principals is the following recommendation:

> **OESPA urges the State Department to begin State Assessment at the fourth grade, following both national practice and the recommendations of NAEYC and ACEI (Association for Childhood Education International).**

At what age is it appropriate to begin statewide assessment?

In order to discuss the needs of the non-graded primary program, it is important to define which children we are discussing.

What grades comprise a non-graded primary? What is early childhood?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has defined early childhood as birth through age 8, and defines developmentally appropriate practices for "the primary grades" accordingly. In Oregon, we cannot assume that all children are nine years old by August 31 of the year they enter fourth grade.

For purposes of discussing the primary program, we will consider all children in our schools who are preschool through the end of third grade.

What are appropriate practices for assessment of children in our primary grades?

NAEYC (Bredekamp, 1987) lists the following recommendations:

> No letter or numerical grades are given during the primary years. Grades are considered inadequate reflections of children's ongoing learning.
>
> Each child's progress is assessed primarily through observation and recording at regular intervals. Results are used to improve and individualize instruction. No letter or number grades are given. Children are helped to understand and correct their errors.

Children's progress is reported to parents in the form of narrative comments following an outline of topics. A child's progress is reported in comparison to his or her own previous performance, and parents are given general information about how the child compares to standardized national averages.

Children are not "promoted" nor do they "fail." Because children progress through sequential curriculum at different paces, they are allowed to progress in all areas as they acquire competence. Retention is avoided because of its serious impact on children's self-esteem and the fact that the practice of retaining children in a grade for another year disproportionately affects male, minority, very young, and low-income children. The program is designed to serve the needs of the children; the children are not expected to change to fit the program.

If the practices listed above are appropriate for students through the end of third grade, when should we begin statewide testing of elementary students?

The Research: Extensive research (Lillian Katz) tells us that the younger the child, the more errors we make in assessment. Standardized texts . . . are especially questionable in primary grades. In these years, children's growth is most uneven, and in large measure idiosyncratic (Vito Perrone). This proposal is consistent with recommendations of NAEYC, ACEI, and the National Education Goals Panel.

The National Decision: The National Education Goals Panel, responding to President Bush's goals in America 2000, has designated *grades 4, 8, and 12* for national tests. (Attached are excerpts from *Education Week*, October 23, 1991, "Who's Who in National Standards and Assessments.")

The States' Decision: A recent telephone survey of Chief State School Officers yielded very little enlightenment regarding current or common practice. Twelve percent of the states begin some kind of testing below third grade. Forty-two percent of the states begin testing below fourth grade. That means that fifty-eight percent of states begin testing at fourth grade or beyond, do not test statewide (two states) or leave the choice of testing up to the individual school districts (three states). Pennsylvania and Utah do not begin state testing until fifth grade, and Minnesota and Idaho begin at sixth grade. By the time the task force report is printed, this data may no longer be accurate as many states are in the process of reviewing testing practices.

National Standards/Assessments: Students
(from *Education Week*, October 23, 1991)

America 2000: Bush Administration plan released in April 1991 calls for creating "American Achievement Tests" that would measure 4th, 8th, and 12th graders against "world-class standards" in five subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, and geography. Tests would be voluntary, but colleges would be encouraged to use them for admissions purposes, and employers would be urged to use them in hiring decisions.

The standards and a set of national tests–against which state tests could be calibrated–would be developed in conjunction with the National Education Goals Panel. President Bush wants the first tests for fourth graders to be available by September 1993. The Administration maintains that the development of national achievement standards and tests does not require Congressional approval.

Meanwhile, the Administration has asked Congress to expand the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The proposed legislation would mandate regular assessments in English, mathematics, history, science, and geography, and require collection of state-by-state data for states that wish to participate.

The bill does not address who would pay for the expansion, although it would require states interested in state-level data to put up $100,000 and to help administer the tests. States would also be able to use National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to generate data on a school-by-school and district-by-district basis, if the Congress approved. Diane S. Ravitch, assistant secretary for educational research and improvement, has said the Administration does not want to turn NAEP into its proposed American Achievement Tests.

American College Testing Program: Developing Work Keys, a national system for teaching and assessing employability skills that could be used by employers and by students who plan to enter the workforce directly after high school. The program, which is being developed in cooperation with six to eight states nationwide, eventually will include assessments and instruction in the specific skills required for particular jobs.

Earliest release, 1992 or 1993. Executive director of the American College Testing Center for Education and Work, Joel D. West.

College Board: Launched an effort known as "Pacesetters," in August 1991 to develop a series of "capstone" high-school courses and related performance-based assessments to be taken at the end of the twelfth grade. The board expects to pilot its first exam in mathematics next year.

The project is modeled after the board's Advanced Placement Program. Like the Advanced Placement Program, the new courses and assessments will be developed by teams of teachers who identify essential learning outcomes in the curriculum. Unlike the Advanced Placement Program, the new courses and assessments will be aimed at all high school students, not just the college-bound, and will emphasize performance-based assessments.

The board has secured an agreement with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Mathematical Association of America to help develop its pilot course. If the pilot is successful, the board will seek funding to include other subjects. It has also begun discussions about forming a partnership with the New Standards Project.

The "Pacesetter" exams will not replace the College Board's Achievement Tests, which many selective colleges require for admission, and which are taken in the junior, rather than senior, year of high school.

Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce: Formed by the National Center on Education and the Economy in 1989. Released a report in June 1990, "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages," that called for the creation of a system of national standards and assessments, benchmarked to the highest in the world, to be met by all students at around age 16. A student who passed the proposed series of performance-based assessments would be awarded a "Certificate of Initial Mastery" that made him eligible for further education and training or for employment. Work to create this new system of standards and assessments is proceeding via the New Standards Project.

The report also recommended the creation of a comprehensive system of technical and professional education certificates to signify work readiness for a variety of jobs. Students would acquire such certificates after earning a Certificate of Initial Mastery. A bill now before Congress would establish a National Board for Professional and Technical Standards to develop these occupational proficiency standards and assessments.

Co-chairmen, William E. Brock, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, and Ira C. Magaziner, president of SJS, Inc. Commission members included James B. Hunt, Jr., chairman of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Thomas H. Kean, former Governor of New Jersey; Lauren B. Resnick, director of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh; and Marc S. Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy.

Core Knowledge Foundation: Founded by E. D. Hirsch, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, in 1986. Current funding, approximately $140,000 from private foundations. Has developed a core grade-by-grade curriculum for grades 1-6, called the "Core Knowledge Sequence," based on what students should know to be culturally literate. Ratified in a conference in March 1990. Has developed pilot exams in the past for sixth and twelfth graders. No current plans to develop additional assessments.

Educate America Inc: A private organization founded in the winter of 1991 by Saul Cooperman, former commissioner of education in New Jersey, and chaired by Thomas H. Kean, former Governor of New Jersey.

Initially proposed to develop a mandatory national achievement test for all high school seniors at public and private schools. Plan was to contract with commercial test publishers to develop and administer 90-minute tests in six subject areas: reading, writing, mathematics, American and world history, science, and geography. Tests would include multiple choice and performance-based items. Had planned to seek approximately $90 million a year in federal funding for the proposal.

This past summer, the organization's leaders reassessed their efforts and said they were concentrating on promoting the idea of national tests, rather than on trying to build one. But Richard A. DiPatri, the group's vice president, said the organization was "keeping its options open" on whether it would create a national exam.

Educational Testing Service: Creating WORKLINK, a paper and electronics record-keeping system for use by students and prospective employers in place of high school transcripts. Began in 1989-90. Currently being tested in several sites around the country.

Proposed system would include results from some form of workplace-skills assessment. Also attempting to report student work habits–such as punctuality, attendance, ability to work in teams–based on confidential teacher ratings. ETS project director, George Elford.

National Assessment of Educational Progress: Congressionally mandated program begun in 1969. Receives about $20 million a year in federal funds. Tests a national sample of students at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, among other subjects. Current legislation prohibits NAEP results from being used to rank or compare schools or school districts.

In 1988, Congress authorized a limited expansion of NAEP to produce state-by-state comparisons of student achievement. Specifically, it allowed the collection of state-by-state data in eighth-grade mathematics in 1990, and in fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics and fourth-grade reading in 1992.

At the same time, Congress requested a study of whether such state-level assessments can be conducted fairly or accurately. That study, being conducted by the National Academy of Education, is due out this month.

Congress has not yet approved permanent changes in NAEP to allow for state-level comparisons on an ongoing basis or to make testing more regular in specific subject areas. The Bush Administration has asked that the law be changed to allow for state, district, and school-by-school comparisons.

National Assessment Governing Board: Congressionally mandated group of educators, policy-makers, and citizens responsible for setting policy related to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In August 1990, the board convened a task force to set national standards for what students should know and be able to do at three levels of achievement–basic, competent, and advanced–in mathematics in grades 4, 8, and 12.

These levels were used by the National Education Goals Panel in its September 1991 report card to describe student performance in mathematics, even though their validity was widely criticized.

The board this month contracted with American College Testing to develop standards for its 1992 tests in reading, math, and writing.

Executive director, Roy E. Turby. Current chairman, Richard A. Boyd, former state superintendent of education in Mississippi. The former chairman was Chester E. Finn, Jr., a professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University . . . .

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On Standardized Testing

Vito Perrone

In 1976, ACEI issued a position paper calling for a moratorium on standardized testing in the early years of school (ACEI and Perrone). Although pressure to test continued in the late 1970s, there was also vigorous debate about negative effects of testing. Support for more authentic forms of assessment, rooted in close observation and systematic documentation of children's learning, became more common. But in 1983, after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the climate changed dramatically. Testing programs expanded greatly, especially in kindergarten and primary grades. The results have been deleterious, particularly for poor and minority children.

While standardized tests are problematic at all ages and levels of schooling, they are especially questionable in primary grades. In these years, children's growth is most uneven, and in large measure idiosyncratic. Skills needed for school success are in their most fluid stages. Implications of failure in these years can be devastating. A moratorium is more necessary now than it was in 1976. It is time for teachers, school administrators, and parents to say more forcefully than ever that testing in the primary years must end and testing thereafter must be reduced.

Some Hard Questions about Standardized Testing

How many of us really believe that a child's intelligence, achievement, and competence can be represented adequately by standardized tests? Do we believe that any distribution curve is capable of classifying all children? Such beliefs would defy almost everything we understand about children's growth and responses to educational encounters. Upon reflection, few teachers and parents would accept that a single test score can define any child.

The composition of a test can be examined with such questions as: Are the questions clear? Do they address the educational concerns of teachers or parents? Do they provide useful information about individual children or a class? That teachers and parents can offer so few positive responses to these questions surely suggests problems with the tests and the emphasis placed on them.

In contrast, almost all teachers respond affirmatively to the following questions: Do you feel any pressure to teach to the tests? If the test were not given, would you use fewer skill sheets, workbooks, and other simple response pedagogical materials? The tests clearly limit educational possibilities for children.

The Tests and Their Uses

While many of the prekindergarten tests are of the paper and pencil variety, most have a more individual, performance-oriented quality. Results of these "screening" tests are often the basis for cautioning parents to "wait another year before starting your child in kindergarten." They are also used as a means of "early identification" of individuals who need special assistance, according to the preschool screeners. Although there is scant evidence that such early screening is beneficial, it has become almost universal.

Children typically receive their first paper and pencil test, which ostensibly gauges reading readiness, in kindergarten. Those who score in the bottom quartile are encouraged or required to spend another year in kindergarten, or are placed in a K-1 transitional setting that often leads to later retention. The rationale is that children benefit from the knowledge teachers gain from the test. Yet, teachers gain little important knowledge from such tests.

The tests used in the majority of school districts have expanded in their purposes. For example, children's scores now determine whether they will be placed in a gifted and talented program or become eligible for special tutoring. Results of annual achievement tests also determine eligibility for enrichment programs, special classes, and the like. Tests are used to determine a student's academic level. They become the basis for early tracking and then ongoing tracking. In recent years, test results have been increasingly used to determine whether a child should advance from one grade to another.

If tests play a significant role in grade advancement or are the primary basis for a school's so-called accountability, teachers feel compelled to spend considerable time preparing children to take the tests. In such cases, the tests become the school curriculum. Preparation usually begins many weeks before actual testing. During this period, two to three hours a day are often devoted to practicing tests and related exercises, all alien to the ongoing instruction and the usual student response patterns. Teachers readily acknowledge that questions in the practice exercises, which are similar to those on the real test, are trivial. Moreover, the possible responses contain words that children likely have never seen and certainly don't use. By the time the three days of real testing are over, weeks, sometimes months, have passed. Time for real books has been sacrificed for time spent reading isolated paragraphs and answering multiple-choice questions. Time has been spent not on posing problems for which math might be used, and in the process coming to a natural understanding of math concepts, but on reviewing skills such as addition, subtraction, and division–all in isolation.

Reasons for caution in the use of tests include the possible loss of children's self-esteem; the distortion of curriculum, teaching and learning; and the lowering of expectations. Other concerns relate to the tests themselves. For example, tests used in grades 1 and 2 are different from those used in grades 3-6. The early tests depend on pictures and vocabulary, while later tests place greater stress on content. Consequently, high scores in early testing may not carry over to later testing.

Because tests include diverse subject areas, they may or may not relate directly to what children have been taught or evoke children's interest. In addition, the multiple-choice format of standardized tests confuses many children who are not accustomed to it. Children who have been routinely encouraged to be cooperative learners are forbidden to talk during testing. Children who have been taught to work problems out slowly are told speed is essential.

When children are labeled *unready* or *slow learners* because of standardized test results, their educational opportunities generally become narrow and unchallenging. One dimensional tasks such as those found in skill sheets and drills figure prominently in these children's education. A high proportion of the children in special education and lower-level tracks come from lower socioeconomic populations, including large numbers of minorities.

ACEI strongly believes that no standardized testing should occur in the preschool and K-2 years. Further, ACEI strongly questions the need for testing every child in the remainder of the elementary years. The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy recently reached the same position. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has also called for an end to K-2 testing.

Centrality of the Teacher in Classroom-Based Assessment

Increasingly, teachers are making it clear that they know how to address accountability issues through good documentation of children's actual work. One sees the result most clearly in the area of writing, which represents the most serious break yet in the power of standardized testing. Those concerned about writing in the schools argue convincingly that writing cannot be assessed with validity outside the instructional process and that writing to a real audience is central. Further, they assert that writing at its best is not easily standardized in current psychometric or technological terms. An understanding of a child's writing cannot begin with one task, a single piece of work, or writing that has not been completed within the norms of classroom practice. Such writing isn't likely to bring forth the student's most committed efforts.

An understanding of children's writing leads educators to carefully organized classroom documentation. For example, teachers systematically preserve copies of both drafts and finished pieces of a student's writing. Two or three pieces a month provide a reasonable collection. Periodic review of this writing informs a teacher's ongoing efforts to help particular students. At year's end, the chronologically organized accumulation is subjected to a careful review, with some of the following questions serving as a framework: What are the salient features and dominant motifs of the work? How much invention does it show? What connections to academic and social strengths are in evidence? How much diversity of word use is there?

Conclusion

The classroom setting and the teacher are central to an assessment program that is rooted in carefully organized and considered documentation. Authentic, performance-based

assessment guarantees an increased understanding of the growth of individual children. Such an understanding reduces the need for currently used standardized testing programs.

All testing of young children in preschool and grades K-2 and the practice of testing every child in the later elementary years should cease. To continue such testing in the face of so much evidence of its deleterious effects is the height of irresponsibility.

This digest was adapted from a position paper of the Association for Childhood Education International by Vito Perrone. "On Standardized Testing," which appeared in Childhood Education (Spring, 1991): 132-142.

For More Information

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Report of Goal IV
1991-1992 Term
Submitted to the Board — February 1992

Members of the Task Force: Sue Braithwaite, Chair; Patricia Johnson, Shirley Gernhart, Cathy Colburn, Cheris Owens, Jan White, Bob Olstrom, Jean Donato, Kathy Fraser, Dave Madelblatt, C. Leonard Anderson, Virginia Ross, Oregon Education Association (OEA) staff liaison

Charges:

1. Prepare a report for the OEA Board of Directors regarding implementation of non-graded primary including staffing needs, inservice or professional development, scope of curriculum revision and materials needed, scheduling, and other implementation requirements.

2. Prepare legislative or regulatory recommendations as appropriate regarding implementation of mandatory non-graded primary.

Activities: The task force read a great deal of information regarding the subject. A panel from districts that have implemented non-graded primary made a presentation to the task force (Corvallis—Karen Eason; Rhonda Herring and Carol Covlin from Oregon City). Sue Braithwaite visited Charles Dickens and Simon Fraser schools in Vancouver, British Columbia. Jan White and Cathy Colburn visited Mary Harrison School in Toledo, Oregon. Sue Braithwaite also visited Boeckman Creek School in West Linn. Bob Olstrom shared information with teachers in his school district. Cathy, Sue and Kathy attended OEA Road Show hearings to gather information regarding non-graded primary. An article appeared in Oregon Education and inquiries were received from members regarding our task force. A video tape was reviewed of a non-graded primary classroom in Oregon City.

Findings:

Staffing needs -

Primary grade levels—Class loads of 15-20 with 1 teacher and 1 assistant. In addition, each mainstreamed, severely handicapped student should have a one-on-one assistant.

Intermediate grade levels—Class loads of 20-24 with 1 teacher, 1 assistant. In addition, each mainstreamed severely handicapped student will have a one-on-one assistant.

Retain specialists in support roles.

Support of the process by administration, parents and other volunteers.

Inservice -

District must provide, at no cost to employee, inservice in the following areas:

Curriculum integration, classroom management, strategies, assessment, stress management, developmentally appropriate practices, interpersonal problem-solving skills.

Curriculum revision and materials -

Need time (release time, more planning time during the workday, or extended contract) for training, planning, and writing integrated curriculum.

Must allow for flexibility of curriculum based choices on local and individual needs (texts, materials, scope, and sequence).

Provide materials, supplies, and equipment needed to carry out developmentally appropriate programs.

Assessment techniques should reflect developmentally appropriate practices.

Scheduling -

Ensure adequate common time for teams to plan, develop, and evaluate.

Ensure additional blocks of non-student contact time for long-range planning and evaluation.

Ensure blocks of uninterrupted instruction time.

Facilities -

A district should not be mandated to have a program where the facilities are not conducive to non-graded primary.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OEA LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The task force recognizes that HB 3565 has many provisions regarding non-graded primary which this committee supports. The members of the task force are concerned that many of the positive provisions of the bill will be ignored by school districts in their move to implement non-graded primary. The task force recommends that OEA take a position in the Legislature that all provisions of Section 19 be maintained and implemented by the Department of Education and the various school districts as non-graded primary is put in place.

In addition, the OEA legislative program must include the following:

1. There must be statewide and local funding available.

2. Site committees must be in place at the building level before any options are implemented.

3. Programs should not be mandated.

4. Local school districts, individual schools, individual employees, and parents should be able to determine whether they will participate in non-graded primary and if so, what model will be implemented.

5. Class size limits are necessary (See above findings).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Should there be a system of articulation from non-graded to other programs?

Should there be consideration given to prevention of teacher-classified burn-out?

Should teacher-training programs include methodology for non-graded primary?

Should there be a system to evaluate the effectiveness of non-graded primary?

Should the paper-pencil tests of the state and local school districts be changed to reflect developmentally appropriate programs?

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Materials on Charles Dickens Elementary School

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